

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
BLOCK ISLAND SCHOOL

January 27, 2014

4:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Tuesday, January 21, 2014, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. The following members were present: Elizabeth Connor, Patricia Doyle, William Padien, and Christopher Willi. Annie Hall was not in attendance. Robert Hicks was also present.

A motion (Padien, Connor) to amend the agenda to meet with the Town Council before addressing the rest of the items carried with a vote of 4-0.

Annual Pre-Budget Meeting with Town Council

Kim Gaffett, Norris Pike, Chris Warfel, and Finance Director Amy Land were in attendance for the pre-budget meeting between the School Committee and the Town Council. It was stated that the school department appreciates the town setting aside money for various capital projects and hopes this will continue; more than half the money to repair the front façade has already been set aside. The old roof over the high school wing is being patched when necessary and local contractors feel it could last another five years before having to replace it. School Committee members questioned whether the town would bond the various capital projects, but no decision has been made by the Town Council. Mr. Hicks stated that the moratorium on the 30 percent reimbursement from the state for school building projects may be lifted.

Mr. Hicks reported that there are a couple of unknowns in the upcoming budget. The health care information will not be received until after the school budget is submitted to the town. Next year's budget shows a ten percent increase in this line item. The school does have approximately \$26,000 in a rate stabilization account with The Trust that can be used to offset higher increases if necessary. Contract negotiations with the teachers' association have just begun leaving a question mark for the salary and benefits lines. It is hoped that the school will receive an energy grant for a solar electrical system. Chris Warfel stated that there may be an issue with the electricity generated from the solar panels and Block Island Power Company. Mr. Hicks will send correspondence to BIPCO for clarification.

Several items have negatively affected our current budget. Tuition for an out of district placement was increased by \$22,000. The cost of the school's audit increased quite dramatically. William Padien did not see any other items of concern unless something unexpected happened.

2014-2015 Budget Work Session

Mr. Hicks submitted the first draft of the 2014-2015 budget along with a memorandum explaining proposed program changes and the assumptions made in the development process. Currently, next year's budget has increased by five percent over the current budget. To bring it down to a four percent increase in town support would require a reduction of \$39,671. Mr.

Hicks hopes this can be done with updated information that arises over the budget process and not require program adjustments.

At the recommendation of the auditors the revenue and expenditure sections of the cafeteria account have been separated out of the general budget and managed through its own account. However, the school does subsidize the lunch program and this is reflected as a transfer in line 59100 of the budget.

Some of the items mentioned under expenditures were:

- Medicaid payments should increase by \$4,000.
- The unbudgeted increase in tuition for an out of district placement incurred this year will carry over into next year.
- The governor's budget calls for a slight decrease in state aid.
- The listed School Committee stipend is incorrect and that line item can be reduced by \$10,350 if the committee waives the stipends again this year.
- The school's portion of the audit increased by \$11,000 this year and will continue into next year.
- There is a slight increase in the athletic budget to cover a new position to supervise the use of the weight room.
- Salaries and benefits will increase by three percent for town employees. Negotiations with the teachers' association will begin soon.
- Health care has been increased by ten percent, but \$26,308 is available in a stabilization account with The Trust if needed.
- There was an increase of \$4000 in software to cover a new virtual learning provider. The national online curriculum will expand our capacity to offer teacher-supported online classes managed by our faculty with a parent portal similar to Aspen.
- An expenditure history over the last five years was used to determine the amount in building operations.
- Race to the Top funding ends this year so professional development has been increased slightly to support ongoing curriculum work.
- At the request of the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Task Force \$3000 has been included to help fund the student assistance counselor.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (Padien, Doyle) to approve the minutes of the 1:00 p.m. meeting held on December 16, 2013, as presented carried with a vote of 3-0-1 with Elizabeth Connor abstaining.

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve the minutes of the 7:00 p.m. meeting held on December 16, 2013, as presented carried with a vote of 4-0.

A motion (Padien, Willi) to approve the executive session minutes of the meeting held on December 16, 2013, as written carried with a vote of 4-0.

Reports

Mr. Hicks reported that the standing of accounts as of December 31, 2013, is slightly more positive than last month because of the salary line and electricity. A motion (Connor, Padien) to approve the standing of accounts as of December 31, 2013, carried with a vote of 4-0.

Mr. Hicks submitted an excerpted article on the research of multi-grade classrooms. The full article and others on the topic have been placed on the school's website. Mr. Hicks scheduled a visit on February 6 to an ungraded K-1 school in Middletown to see how it is organized. He stated that there are risks and concerns with this type of organization. It takes a lot more teacher planning. Teachers must be trained and prepared and classrooms must be equipped to function this way. If done properly it should not have a negative impact on student achievement, but it should provide more opportunities for social growth.

Old Business

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve Policy ID: Extra-Curricular/Athletic Participation as written carried with a vote of 4-0. Mr. Hicks stated that there had been a question regarding when a student, who had been academically ineligible during the second quarter, could be eligible. The policy states that academic eligibility is based on the previous quarter's report card and this includes paper and/or electronic report cards.

New Business

Laura Breunig submitted correspondence requesting a maternity leave from mid-February through early May. A motion (Connor, Padien) to approve Laura Breunig's request for a maternity leave carried with a vote of 4-0.

A motion (Padien, Doyle) to consent to the appointment of Maura Cousins as a teacher assistant carried with a vote of 4-0.

The auditor's report on our UCOA procedures was submitted for review. Mr. Hicks stated that one correction was made to an error the auditor found. A motion (Padien, Connor) to accept the UCOA Report dated June 30, 2013, carried with a vote of 4-0.

Mr. Hicks explained that the Wireless Classroom Initiative will provide funds for every public school classroom in Rhode Island to have wireless access. However, the grant requires that the school remain open and operated as a public school for a minimum period of five years beyond the completion date of the work under agreement. New Shoreham's grant amount is \$59,254.53. Several documents explaining the program and how Meraki was chosen were submitted for School Committee review. Meraki is a RIDE approved vendor and has been chosen by North Kingstown School Department, which provides our technical support. A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve the wireless bid for the state bond project with the work to be completed by Meraki carried with a vote of 4-0.

Only one bid was received for mowing services for the 2014-15 fiscal year (Cottage Services of BI, LLC at \$250 per cut). There is not change in price over last year. A motion (Padien, Connor) to accept the mowing bid submitted by Cottage Services of BI, LLC in the amount of \$250 per cut carried with a vote of 4-0.

Calendar of Events

The next budget work session is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 30. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 10.

Executive Session

A motion (Padien, Willi) at 6:36 p.m. to go into executive session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-46-4, 5(a)(2) for contract negotiations carried with a vote of 4-0.

Open Session

A motion (Padien, Connor) at 6:59 p.m. to return to open session carried with a vote of 4-0.

A motion (Padien, Connor) to seal the executive session minutes carried with a vote of 4-0.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Doyle) at 7:00 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 4-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: February 10, 2014